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**NEW YEAR'S ADDRESS**

TO THE

**CONGREGATION**

OF

**TRINITY FREE (EPISCOPAL) CHURCH,**

**HALIFAX, N. S.**

HALIFAX, N. S.

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**HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA.**

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MY DEAR FRIENDS,

Two eventful years have passed away since I distributed among you a few printed lines, by way of putting you in remembrance of the things that pertain to your everlasting peace.

Abroad there have since been wars and rumours of wars,— Nation has risen up against Nation. The powerful Monarch has been vanquished, dethroned, and called to his great account. There have been earthquakes, and terrific tempests, and unexampled floods and fires in divers places. The mighty ocean has become the grave of tens of thousands of our fellow-creatures, until the Archangel's trump shall resound through its vast and unexplored caverns, and make the sea give up its dead, including numbers who have left desolated homes in our own land. The pestilence that walketh in darkness, and the sickness that destroyeth at noon day, have taken, and are still taking their deadly march to and fro upon the earth, sweeping from its face hundreds of thousands of young and old, high and low. Famine too, has been permitted to depopulate widespread lands, and consign millions to a fearful death.

We have read of all these terrible things; we have seen them from afar, and no doubt our hearts have been shocked, and have throbbed with deep sympathy for the sufferings of our common humanity, and, it is hoped, they have also warmed with devout thankfulness, to the great Ruler of all things, that we have been spared; that our lot is cast in a land favoured beyond most other portions of the earth; that we are strangers to wars and commotions; that we have been blest with health and plenty; that sea and land have yielded good returns for the labors of our

happy and industrious people. Above all, that we are where **JEHOVAH** is truly known—a land of Bibles and Churches, and Gospel light, and abounding religious privileges. Surely not for our righteousness are we thus blessed, above other people, but because our Lord is gracious and merciful, and has not been extreme to mark what we have done amiss. For indeed we must confess, that as a community we have much to humble us in the sight of God. Our public sins are many and grievous. "Because of swearing the land mourneth,"—Sabbaths are desecrated,—The monster evil of Intemperance, though scotched, is not killed: a standard is lifted up against it firmly held by thousands of noble hearts and strong hands. Temperance banners are unfurled to the breeze everywhere in the towns and villages, in the beautiful valleys and on the smiling hillsides of our happy land. The boys of our country are organized for the fight. Our young girls are helping in the good cause—God bless them all of whatever name! I never hear or read of their doings without thankfulness. Still my friends, too many stand aloof. Come and help us against the worst enemy we have; against that which fills the early graves, destroys the happiness of thousands of homes, breaks the hearts of wives, and fathers and mothers, fills our prisons, and brings hell upon God's earth, and is the most effectual weapon in Satan's hands for the destruction of body and soul.

Allow me to say that it is your duty, and your interest, to help by your voice, your prayers and your example, those who are contending against this gigantic evil. It will not do for us to say with Cain, "Am I my brother's keeper?" all of us are that; all are bound to save him if we can by word or deed, or example.

Under that conviction forty-two years ago I was led to try what I thus might do for those around me, and so, by God's help, I mean to act to my dying day. If you love your old pastor,—if you love your brother man,—if you love your country,—if you love the cause of Christ, which is sapped and hindered by Intemperance, let me beg of you to give your countenance, and name to some one or other of the numerous organizations within your reach.

Turning to the affairs of our own Congregation, I acknowledge with humble thankfulness that mercy of God, by which I have



been preserved from all sickness during the biennial period of which I am treating, not having been hindered in any one instance from attending to the calls of duty of whatever kind. I hope the imperfection which has marked the performance of these duties, may be mercifully forgiven by my heavenly Master. We have had to lament, in common with other churches, the removal by death of many of our number who never failed to be in their places on the Lord's Day. May those who remain consider it their great privilege as well as their duty, to be strict in their attendance in the Sanctuary, and feel, like the psalmist, a desire and longing to be in the courts of the Lord. Do not content yourselves with coming *once* in the day, but if it be possible, let every Sunday morning and evening find you in the House of God. I know that in the case of many mothers of families, this may not be practicable. But for the men there is no excuse, as I often tell you, except sickness, or staying at home to let the wife have her turn too. And here let me say, that the habit which many have, of wandering to other places of worship, and turning their backs on their own Minister is not very complimentary to him, and of doubtful benefit to themselves. "Itching ears" were condemned long ago by higher authority than the writer. True, if outward show, and pleasing of the eye, or artistic music be the object in view, it will not be found in Trinity. I am too old, if there was no other reason, to adopt any of the novelties which are creeping in among us. To have things "done decently and in order," as to the externals of worship is what I aim at; the prayers devoutly offered, in such a way as to be "understanded of the people." The word of God reverentially *read* in the best style,—The praises of God "sung with the spirit and the understanding also," not merely by a few persons in the choir—not to shew off the "performer," but to make "melody in every heart." This is what I desire to see in our worship. You know how often I exhort all the members of the congregation that can raise a tune at all, to join in that beautiful part of our service; and I hope to see the day when you will make the rafters ring with the heartfelt praises of your God. I desire also to have you all take *your* part in the service by repeating aloud the responses, as directed in your Prayer Books. On this point also you will remember many a hint from me. How much more an-

imating to all of us would be the loud and hearty "Amen," sounding as in the Churches of old, like a "clap of thunder," waking up the sleeper, and thrilling every soul, than the hum-drum whispers which content too many, as if they were afraid to have an answer to the petition "Open our lips O Lord, and our mouths shall shew forth Thy praise."

Do try, brethren, and sisters (for I want your sweet voices too) then, at once to comply with your Church's order, and impart life and spirit to our meetings. While writing thus, I am thankful to note often-times a pleasing attention to these matters on the part of many, which I hope to see still more general.

But while all this is important in its place, I hope you know me well enough to be assured, that I wish to lead you to far higher things. "God is a spirit and must be worshipped in spirit and in truth." Without that, all our service, however elaborate, though compassed by scores of performers, and accompanied by sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer and all kinds of music, will not reach the ears of the Eternal. The "God be merciful to me a sinner," coming from the heart of some humble suppliant, even in a way-side school house, or a rough and open barn (I have had service in both such places hundreds of times) will come up before Him with more acceptance, than from the most costly church which man can build, where the "power of Godliness" is wanting.

Yes, dear friends, I ardently desire to see true and vital Godliness flourish and abound amongst you. To be assured that the leaven of pure and undefiled Religion is leavening the whole mass of our people, is my heart's desire and prayer to God for you all, young and old, rich and poor, if indeed I had any of the former to address. I want to see you all good christians as well as outwardly regular church folk. I desire to know that you carry your religion into your families and places of business, that you do not leave it behind you in the church, putting it on with your Sunday clothes, and not wearing it the rest of the week. But the mechanic taking it to his shop,—the trader minding it in his dealings,—the laborer on the wharf or other place of toil,—the wife in her household,—the parents among their children,—the servants with their employers. This is what we strive and pray for, in our going out and coming in

among you. To have you all, old and young, "glorifying God in your bodies and your spirits which are God's."

The true minister of Christ may, without presumption say with the beloved disciple, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children (or people) walk in the truth." But I need not add that for the attainment of these things, we must be ever "looking unto Jesus, as the author and finisher of our faith"—the root of the whole matter—the Alpha and Omega, beginning and ending of our salvation, without whom we preach and you hear in vain. "If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His." O! for a larger measure of that spirit to be shed abroad in all of our souls, Pastors and people. That is what we want most of all. Seek it, then, as you hope to be saved, in God's appointed way, not by leaving your Church, where if you cannot find the Lord, you will find him nowhere on earth. Honor his sabbath,—search the scriptures,—pray without ceasing—in your private retirements, and in your families. If you neglect this, you cannot expect Religion to flourish in your own souls, nor your sons and daughters to grow up good Christians, and loving and dutiful to yourselves.

Come regularly and devoutly to the Lord's table, to do as he has commanded you—for the strengthening and refreshing of your souls—by faith in the one great and all-sufficient atonement. The guests at this holy feast do not increase with us as fast as I wish. Some of you who have been confirmed have never gone farther, and are not Communicants. Do not stop there. Wait no longer. I am sometimes sent for in the last moments of life, to administer the sacred ordinance for the first time, or after a long interval. Let not that be *your* way. Come in your prime, in the way appointed by Him who died for you, and said with almost his last breath, "Do this in remembrance of me." How can we face Him in the next world, if we wilfully neglect that solemn, that easy, that tender command? I do not believe in what is called "Sacramental Religion." But neither do I believe in genuine christianity without this eminently christian ordinance. I would be sorry to say that because you were to receive the Lord's Supper every day in the week, you would therefore be true Christians. But I am unable to see how you can be so, while you neglect the ordinance of Christ altogether.

Indeed, I am often puzzled, when I see many whose lives and habits seem to be without stain, observing all other ordinances blameless, but yet neglecting this the highest of them all.

Dear brethren, think of these things, I pray you.—We live in serious days and in times of unhappy divisions. Errors in doctrine and practice abound, as they have done in other ages of the Church. To the “Law and the Testimony” I would refer you all. The pure Word of God is our only safe guide. In the words of the 6th Article of our Church, “Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to Salvation, so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, as an article of Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation.” I feel constrained to warn you against new heresies which are creeping around us. We are told by St. Paul to “mark them that cause divisions among you and avoid them.” Now, there are those among us, who do this very thing; who tell our people and members of other denominations, “you are all wrong. You cannot be saved as Church of England people, Methodists, Presbyterians or anything else but as with us.” Therefore come out from those Churches and join us; and now and then they do “beguile unstable souls.” I cannot enter at length into their tenets here.

Enough for you and me is it to know, that though the Lord has said “When you pray, say, Our Father,” &c., they *will not say it*. Enough that they will have no ministry, though Christ appointed one;—enough that they deny the Old Testament Saints a place among the Church of God. Alas for poor Abel, Enoch and Noah,—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses and all the rest of the catalogue in the 11th chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Enough that they say, “they alone constitute the Church,”—all outside are connected with apostacy, infidelity and Socinianism; that the moral law is not the rule of christian life; that it is almost blasphemy for a Christian to address the Holy Spirit, or to pray for the Spirit in any shape or way; that the Sabbath was ordained for Jews alone, &c., &c.” Those and other unsound and unscriptural doctrines maintained and industriously propagated among us, by the sect in question, are sufficient grounds for my warning you against them, agreeably to



our Ordination promise to be "ready with all faithful diligence to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's Word." Of course it is with regard to their tenets only, and not to individuals holding them, that I make these observations. May God hasten the time when all heresies and divisions shall cease, and "take away whatsoever hinders from Godly union and concord; that as there is but one Body and one Spirit, and one hope of our calling, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of us all, so we may henceforth be all of one heart and of one soul, united in one holy bond of truth and peace, of faith and charity, and may with one mind and one mouth glorify God."

May He hasten this happy consummation. In order to this, let each one of you strive mightily to promote such blessed Unity. Cling together as members of our own congregation; assist in every good work connected with Trinity; in upholding our Sunday School; promoting a full attendance of children of your own families and others; assisting the pastor in their instruction; contributing means for enlarging the Library, and for keeping up the music of the Church.

These things are necessary to our efficient working. Do not wait for me to ask for the needful pecuniary help, which is not pleasant, but hand in, of your own accord, at stated times, say quarterly, what you can afford for such purposes.

And now, dear people all, I must close these plain words, uncertain whether two years hence we shall be found still together. — But whether my time is cut short or mercifully proloaged, I desire to spend and be spent in your service; in striving to build you up in whatever is "worthy and of good report," in seeking more earnestly than ever the salvation of your immortal souls. I hope to be permitted as heretofore, to go in and out among you, sharing in your joys and sorrows, and helping you by God's grace to pass, in faith and comfort, through this vale of tears to your journey's end. There, may we all find our names written in the "Lamb's Book of life," and dwell together for evermore, in the Father's house with many mansions. Meanwhile labour to enter into that rest. Remember that this is not your home. Pray that you may sit loose to this ever shifting scene. Set your

affections on the glorious things which your Lord is keeping for you, and not even on the best of things below.

"And now, brethren, I commend you to God and the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified."

Your affectionate friend and Pastor,

J. C. COCHRAN.

*Halifax, January 1873.*

### DUTIES PERFORMED IN 1871 & 1872.

|                                  | 1871. | 1872. | Total. |
|----------------------------------|-------|-------|--------|
| Baptisms . . . . .               | 101   | 119   | 220    |
| Burials . . . . .                | 57    | 74    | 131    |
| Marriages . . . . .              | 51    | 51    | 102    |
| Visits . . . . .                 | 2207  | 2303  | 4510   |
| Public Services, with Sermon . . | 223   | 259   | 482    |

MEMO.—In the nearly forty-nine years of my ministry, I have been permitted to Baptize 4,000 persons; Marry more than 900 couples; Bury more than 1,200 persons; and to perform Divine Service, with preaching, more than 13,000 times.

**"Glory be to God on High!"**